3. Computerization and Information Technology.

4. Celebration of Fairs and Festivals.

The Plan Budget for 2007-08 is Rs. 953 crore. Rs. 323 crore has been released to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations in the current Five Year Plan for upgradation of infrastructure at tourist destinations/circuits.

Implementation and monitoring of the projects is the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India monitors the progress of implementation and utilization of released central assistance from time to time.

Development of tourism in Sikkim

844. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has chalked out any plan for promotion and development of tourism in the North-Eastern Region (NER) particularly in Sikkim;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Ministry of Tourism, Government of India provides Central Financial Assistance to North Eastern States for development of infrastructure, Information Technology, Large Revenue Generating Projects and for organizing fairs/festivals/events. During the Tenth Five Year Plan, Ministry of Tourism sanctioned tourism projects for Rs. 392.33 crore to all States in the North Eastern Region including Rs. 74.96 crore for Sikkim. During 2007-08, Rs. 119.00 crore has already been sanctioned for tourism projects in North-Eastern States including Rs. 54.83 crore for Sikkim.

The Ministry of Tourism promotes tourism to North East by launching dedicated media campaigns, website and production of publicity and collateral material. Information on North Eastern Region is disseminated through the Indiatourism offices in India and abroad.

Development of tourism in the country

845. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased
to state:

(a) whether Parliamentary Committee has asked Government to adopt "aggressive" marketing and publicity strategies and develop the country as a world class tourist destination for successfully competing with other Asian Nations like China and Singapore;

(b) whether Committee has given number of suggestions for developing competitive destinations that match international standards in terms of price, quality and level of satisfaction;

(c) whether Government has accepted the recommendations;

(d) what are the concrete steps and measures Government proposes to take; and

(e) whether Government has agreed to provide more outlay for development of tourism in the country during 2007-08?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A series of promotional activities have been undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism, through its overseas offices, for increasing the visibility of Indian tourism products and to

promote India as a perferred destination in the overseas markets. These include advertising in the print and electronic media, outdoor advertising at prominent locations, on trains, buses and taxis, participation in fairs and exhibitions, organizing seminars, workshops and road shows, publication of brochures and collaterals, joint advertisement support familiarization tours of tour operators and travel media, etc.

Further, the Ministry of Tourism extends Central Financial Assistance for development of infrastructure under its Scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for development and promotion of tourism. During the Tenth Five Year Plan the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned Rs. 2012.02 crore for 1160 projects to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations Tor promotion and development of tourism. In the current financial year Rs. 323 crore for 128 projects has been released to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for upgradation of infrastructure at tourist destinations.

(e) Yes, Sir. For the year 2007-08 the Ministry of Tourism has been allocated Rs. 953.00 crore.

Repair of bandh in Bihar

846. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Guabari marginal bandh was damaged in 2004 in Sikaran and Pakridayal subdivisions of East Champaran (Bihar) and whether the bandh has not yet been repaired thereby causing loss of crores of rupees to the people;

(b) by when the bandh will be repaired; and

(c) whether any compensation and relief was given to the people and if so, at what rate and to whom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir, there was a breach in the abandoned marginal bandh of Goabari weir on Lalbakeya river in 2004. It has not been closed as yet.

(b) The breach is scheduled to be closed before flood of 2008.

(c) No information is available in this regard.

Water shortage in the country

1847. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that by streamlining the water management in the country, the water shortage could be overcome;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard;

(c) whether river inter-linking project can play a major role in water management; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto and the names of such rivers which have been selected for river inter-linking till now?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi